

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3660

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP(ROBINSON, CHARLES W.)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON TO EGYPT

REF: A. STATE 76244(NOTAL) B. CAIRO 3478(NOTAL)

1. AS ANTICIPATED, EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE SO FAR TO OBTAIN ANY DETAILED INFORMATION ON STATUS OF GOE-SOVIET DISCUSSIONS ON PROJECTS (PARA 4 REFTEL A) WHICH MIGHT BE HANDLED UNDER TRIANGULAR INVESTMENT APPROACH, AS REQUESTED PARA 5, REFTEL A. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED ONLY VIA DIRECTOR APPROACH TO MIN ECON COOPERATION TAHIR AMIN PERHAPS IN CONTEXT OF DISCUSSIONS WITH UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON. HOWEVER, WE ARE PROVIDING BELOW SUCH INFORMATION AS IS AVAILABLE TO US AS RESULT OF REVIEW OF OUR FILES AND DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS KNOWLEDGEABLE EGYPTIANS:

A. ABU TARTUR PHOSPHATE COMPLEX: ACCORDING TO PRIMIN HEGAZI, DURING HIS BRIEFING TO CODEL O'NEILL APRIL 2, GOE WAS AWAITING PRESENTATION BY USSR OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AT ANY MOMENT FOR MINING PORTION OF THIS COMPLEX. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, STUDY HAS NOT YET ARRIVED. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT NO AGREEMENT EXISTS BETWEEN THE GOE AND USSR ON THIS PROJECT, ALTHOUGH GOE OFFICIALS HAVE CONSISTENTLY INDICATED THAT THERE WAS STRONG PROBABILITY SOVIET UNION WOULD UNDER-TAKE MINING PORTION OF PROJECT.

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B. NAG HAMMADI ALUMINUM COMPLEX: ACCORDING TO

CONVERSATIONS HELD WITH TAHPIF AMIN FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW, THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT ON THE PART OF THE SOVIET UNION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXPANSION OF THE PRODUCTION OF THIS COMPLEX FROM 100,000 TO 160,000 TONS, ALTHOUGH THIS HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS. A MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY SOURCE INDICATED RELIEF THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO FURTHER AGREED PLANS FOR EXPANSION SINCE PRESENT COMPLEX REQUIRES NEARLY QUARTER OF ASWAN HIGH DAM'S CAPACITY AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL POWER NEEDED FOR EXPANSION.

C. HELWAN STEEL COMPLEX: NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED FOR ADDITION OF THIRD BLAST FURNACE WHICH WAS TO BE NEXT STAGE OF EXPANSION OF THIS SOVIET-SPONSORED PROJECT.

D. HELWAN REFRACTORIES PLANT: AGREEMENT WAS REACHED FEB 74 WITH USSR TO CONSTRUCT PLANT WHICH WOULD SUPPLY REQUIREMENTS (100,000 TONS YEARLY) OF IRON AND STEEL COMPLEX AT HELWAN. WE ARE UNAWARE OF EXTENT OF ACTIVITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AGREEMENT, IF ANY.

E. NATIONAL CEMENT COMPANY: AGREEMENT WAS REACHED JANUARY 1974 WITH USSR TO INCREASE CAPACITY AT TABBIN FROM 700,000 TONS TO 1,500,000 TONS PER YEAR. WE ARE NOT INFORMED CONCERNING PROGRESS, IF ANY, ON THIS EXPANSION.

F. ASSIUT KENA (NAG HAMMADI) CEMENT PLANTS: NEW PLANTS WITH OUTPUT OF 1.1 MILLION TONS PER YEAR WERE TO BE FINANCED BY USSR, BUT IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED.
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